The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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Notes of the Month.

Before we refer to any events of interest in the present month, we turn back in thought to the stirring events which will make the month of July, 1916, memorable in the history of Ulster. In its early days we read with feelings of intense interest and admiration the newspaper accounts of the gallant part played by the Ulster men in the great British advance. But, unfortunately, such exploits cannot be accomplished in modern warfare without the inevitable sacrifice of many valuable lives. Hence our admiration for deeds done was mingled with anxiety for the doers, and our worst fears were only too soon realised. Amongst the names of gallant officers and men who had made the supreme sacrifice of their lives were those of men we esteemed and loved. Honoured names like those of Davidson, Neill, Smyth and others appeared in that list of those "killed in action" which is daily scanned by so many anxious readers. Elsewhere in the pages of this magazine a more detailed reference is made to members of our religious community who have given up all for King and country. All that we would say here is by way of general reference and comment. Our hearts are full of sympathy for the bereaved everywhere, but we think more especially of those endeared to us by religious association and personal intercourse. We would assure all our sorrowing members of our profound sympathy, and pray that the comfort and consolation of a faith in the all-loving Father may be truly theirs in the time of their sorrow.

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At the meeting of the General Purposes Committee of the Non-Subscribing Church, to which we made reference a month ago, it was unanimously resolved to undertake during the forthcoming autumn and winter a scheme of work having for its objects:—

(1) The deepening and strengthening of the religious life of our churches.

(2) The increase of our practical usefulness in the world.

The particular means by which these objects are to be effected will be left for each congregation to decide. A sub-committee representative of the different Presbyteries has been appointed, and immediate steps will be taken to draw up an appeal which will go forth to the members and friends of our different organizations. It is highly desirable that we should strengthen our feeling of unity and co-operation, and that whatever is undertaken in each congregation has behind it the

influence and impetus of the whole Church. During this and the following month of September steps should be taken in each congregation to decide what form of effort will best meet the needs of each, so that a real start may be made with the autumn. If all our members and friends will give this projected movement their best thought, and prepare themselves to further it by their practical sympathy and support, we are convinced that incalculable benefit to the Church will be the consequence.

* *

Early this month our Moneyrea friends will see the consummation of their endeavours to secure a minister for their pulpit. Some time ago a call was made out to Mr. Albert Whitford, who completed his theological course at the Unitarian Home Missionary College in June. Having accepted that call, and already made a beginning of his new duties, Mr. Whitford is to be ordained by members of the Bangor Presbytery on Wednesday August 2nd. We wish for him and our Moneyrea friends a most successful sequel—a long and happy relationship between pastor and people, and a period of useful service in Moneyrea, and for our community at large. We understand that our friends at Downpatrick have also come to a decision, and we hope soon to be able to announce that they too will be taking practical steps to fill their vacant pulpit. When that is done we can begin our projected campaign of work for the Church with a fully equipped staff of ministers.

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As we anticipated, the presence of the Rev. Alex. Gordon at the closing proceedings of the Unitarian Home Missionary College gave to them a most impressive significance. Both the prize-giving and the valedictory functions were well attended, and all present will not readily forget Mr. Gordon's greeting to the outgoing students and the address in which he spoke in his own inimitable way of the qualities that befit the Christian minister. The other meetings which are arranged for the same week—those of the Ministerial Fellowship and Missionary Conference—were likewise deeply interesting, the war giving to the subjects under discussion a practical significance they do not always possess. As regards the Missionary Conference, it will be of interest to our readers to know that it again, within a period of two years, turned to Ireland in its choice of President. The Rev. Alfred Turner, of Templepatrick, was selected to fill that honoured position, thereby succeeding, after but a short interval, an Irish fellow minister, the Rev. J. H. Bibby, of Ballee.

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As the Missionary Conference has elected one of our Irish ministers to its Presidential Chair this year, it is expected that we shall see some effort to further missionary work in various places here during the next twelve months. For some years the Ulster Unitarian Association, in co-operation with the Missionary Committee of our Church, has been endeavouring to establish services at Bangor. There should be every prospect of realising this hope now.

DOGMA AND NON-SUBSCRIPTION

Rev. E. H. Pickering, B.A.

The title of my address may convey the impression that I wish to raise a question of merely academic significance. But in these stirring times academic questions are felt to be somewhat out of place, and, therefore, in order to win your ear I hasten to say that my subject is intimately related to the intensely practical question of the Church of the Future. On all sides it is being insistently urged and reluctantly admitted (according to the different outlooks involved) that the existing churches have lost their hold as a religious force. And when it is asked, what sort of church is needed to meet the religious needs of to-day, the answer, more or less clearly stated, is: an undogmatic church which will have moral and spiritual driving force

enough to make a practical difference in the world. But it may be a matter of astonishment to many to learn that a church very like this one, I will not say actually existed, but was in process of formation. That church was the ideal of Jesus, of St. Paul, and of the Christian communities of the first few centuries of our era. Time forbids my elaborating this point; yet nothing can be more significant than the warning of Jesus that: "not every one that saith unto me 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of Heaven," and his wonderful picture of the Great Assize, when the ONLY qualification mentioned for entering the kingdom of Heaven is that of Practical Love—"I was an hungered and ye gave me meat," etc. Moreover, in the case of Paul, although his epistles are rich in theological speculations, there is no consistent dogma on which he insists as a Christian qualification; but he constantly stresses the fact that to live with Christ we have to be crucified with him, and in consequence no man has urged more eloquently than he the need for a moral life in the spirit of Christ. So far as I can tell, the idea of conformity with an orthodox standard of belief was quite foreign to the early Christians. There were, I know, theological disputes, but the remarkable thing is the extraordinary variety of religious opinions held and expressed during the first century or two of the Christian Church. And it was then that men were most Christian. Doubtless they failed to make much difference to the external ordering of society, but that can be explained both by their numerical inferiority, and even more by their intense belief in the immediate coming of the kingdom of God. Yet that their religion made a vital difference in their own lives can be seen from the Apology of Aristides, who wrote at the end of the primitive Christian era. His description, doubtless, is one-sided, but even then it represents us with an astonishing picture. I will only quote very briefly. "The Christians have received the commandments (of the Lord Jesus Christ), wherefore they do not commit adultery or fornication; they do not bear false witness nor covet what is not theirs; they walk in all humility and kindness, and falsehood is not found among them. They love one another." Then, after declaring that they carry out all the practical demands of love, such as feeding the hungry, shewing hospitality to strangers, etc., he proceeds: "As men who know God, they ask from Him what is proper for Him to give and for them to receive. Thus they complete their lifetime, and because they acknowledge the goodness of God towards them, lo, therein consists all the beauty that is in the world." There is, I would add, not a word about holding any orthodox faith.

Here then we have adumbrated the Ideal Church, undogmatic and full of moral and spiritual potency. That ideal was lost with the establishment of orthodox Christianity, whether expressed in the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, or Protestant Church. None of the existing orthodox churches, as a church, is Christian, although it may contain many genuine Christians. For what has helped men to be Christians is not dogma, but the appeal of the Gospel story, and the promptings of the Christ spirit in the human heart.

Time after time, however, the appeal of the Gospel story and the promptings of the Christ spirit have led men to seek to found a church which is truly Christian. One of these attempts led to the formation of the Presbyterian Church. In its origin, Presbyterianism took its stand on the Bible, and on the right of the individual conscience to interpret it. It was not a dogmatic system. Calvanism is a later addition, due to the unchristian desire of men to make their co-religionists see eye to eye with them in matters of theology. The original Presbyterianism foreshadowed the church of the future in that it left room for freedom of belief. Consequently it was in Presbyterianism, especially in England and Ireland, that there grew up that variety of theological opinion so necessary to a living religion. But so little was Christianity understood, so strong was human ignorance in its inclination to cling to

salvation by believing, rather than by being and doing, certain things, that the Presbyterians soon violated the grand principle on which their Church was founded, and began to aim at a uniformity of belief. In Ulster, the General Synod began by forming those ministers and congregations suspected of heresy into a Presbytery by themselves. Thus in 1721 was founded the Presbytery of Antrim. Within a few short years—in 1726—this Presbytery was officially cut off from the General Synod. The offence of its members was that they refused to subscribe to the Westminster Confession, holding that, not only was the demand for subscription contrary to Christianity, but also to the principles of Presbyterianism.

Now I would call your attention to a significant fact, which all of us should take to heart. The Antrim Presbytery was asked to propose some expedients whereby they might retain their official connection with the Subscribing Synod. They took the opportunity of stating some broad religious doctrines, doctrines which few of us would find out of date to-day; but these doctrines, despite their breadth, were not proposed as expedients. The one expedient they proposed for keeping Christian churches harmoniously together had no reference to doctrine, but was nothing more nor less than charitable and kindly feeling. I think we to-day have something to learn from these REALLY non-subscribing ancestors of ours. This expedient takes us to the basis of Christianity. The Antrim Presbytery, although composed mainly of Arians (the older variety of Unitarians), did not aim at Arianism. It aimed at the undogmatic church desired so much to-day. It wanted men of all shades of belief within its scope, provided they could work together in Christian love. A like spirit inspired those men who, led by Dr. Montgomery, formed the second Non-subscribing Secession from the General Synod of Ulster, and in the year 1830 constituted themselves the Remonstrant Synod. In a letter sent to the General Synod they made the following significant statement: "In our respective Presbyteries we have freely joined in licensing and ordaining candidates for the ministry, without regard to peculiar theological views; and by whatever name, or in whatever form we may hereafter exist, we hereby pledge ourselves to continue to act upon the same principles, and to ORDAIN TRINITARIANS OR ANTI-TRINITARIANS, as they may be freely chosen by the congregations under our care."

Thus the ancestors of our Non-subscribing Church prided themselves on the fact that there was room for every variety of professing Christian within the fold of the Church of Christ. But it seems to me that things have changed a great deal since then, as is clear, if we put ourselves the plain question: What does our Church stand for to-day—Unitarianism or Non-subscription? I am not asking: What is our Church called? but, what does it stand for? When I informed a loyal member of my own particular church some time ago that it was not Unitarian, the answer was: "Why, I would not come if it were not Unitarian." And in a recent report in the Non-Subscribing Prasbyterian Magazine of a speech made by one of our ministers, the following statement appeared: "This is the weakness of the Non-Subscribing and Unitarian positions. (Note how it is assumed, and quite wrongly, as many of those present would admit, that Unitarian and Non-Subscribing are the same thing). These two have a heavy burden to carry, which is grievous to be borne. They are bound to receive men into fellowship who are only partly, or hardly in sympathy with the religious opinions specially termed Unitarians." "O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!" What was a glory to Dr. Montgomery has now become a burden. In the same way, I fancy, Dr. Cooke, the arch-bigot, found Arian and Unitarian opinions "a heavy burden, grevious to be borne." There is no greater mistake than to assume that, because there is room for Unitarian doctrines in a Non-Subscribing church, therefore Unitarianism is identical with Non-Subscription. It surely does not require much imagination to see that, if the majority of the General Synod

had been Arian (and it was touch and go at one period of Church history whether Arius or Athanasius would triumph), then the Trinitarians would have been the Non-Subscribers. And here is a case pat to our hand. Knowing England better than Ireland, I draw my illustration thence; but that does not affect my point in the least. In England, as in Ireland, the usual argument is that the Open Trust (which is the equivalent of Non-Subscription) leads inevitably to Unitarianism. But a church at Wigan was built by Unitarians, and vested in Unitarian trustees, with an open trust. In time, the minister and the majority of the congregation became Trinitarians, on which the sole Unitarian trustee very properly filled up the trust with orthodox names, and made over the property to the orthodox majority. I do not know whether any similar case has ever occurred in Ireland, but if we are genuine Non-Subscribers we must be prepared for such an eventuality. Force of circumstances has made the bulk of our members Unitarians, but it has not made the Church Unitarian. That can never be called Unitarian without a gross violation of principle. The case of the Dissenters' Chapel Act is most instructive. The English Unitarians found themselves in grave danger of losing their churches and funds, which were originally Presbyterian, by insisting on their churches as being Unitarian. When their right to the possession of this property was questioned, the British and Foreign Unitarian Association (which is usually regarded as the religious representative of our English churches) found that it could not well appear in the matter without considerably strengthening their opponents' case. So, most unscrupulously, as it seems to me, an English Presbyterian Church Union was formed by the Unitarians for the purpose of securing themselves in the possession of Presbyterian property, and then dissolved as soon as the case was won. They tried to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.

In the name of common honesty, we here in Ireland ought to cease this switching on alternately the names Unitarian and Non-Subscribing, just as it suits our purpose. So far as our church membership is concerned, we are not Unitarians; we are Non-Subscribing Presbyterians, and we must be prepared to take the full consequences of that fact. Nowhere, perhaps, has that been better put than by the late Dr. Martineau, himself at one time most zealous to Unitarianize our churches, but later on convinced that he who attempted to do this was "a traitor to his spiritual ancestry, and a deserter to the camp of its persecutors." He said: "Some preceding speaker has professed his undoubted belief that our existing Unitarianism is destined to be the world's universal and eternal faith. Happy and complacent belief! held and disappointed by every sect in turn, with respect to its own creed, yet living and fervent still. I too doubt not that either our present Unitarianism, OR SOMETHING FAR BETTER will be the ultimate faith of men. Why then, should we not confess that we are on our way to better things instead of attempting to consolidate and perpetuate our present modes of thought?" How dare we say that we are the people, and that wisdom will die with us? I venture rather to hold the faith that "The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His Word," and, for the sake of that something better, think we should keep our communion ever open.

It may be said that, since no overt subscription is demanded, Unitarianism is quite broad enough. But surely Unitarianism, if it means anything, means anti-Trinitarianism, and therefore has no place for Trinitarians. I doubt if many of our church members really desire to have Trinitarians amongst them. Yet if our Church is to have a future, it can only be in virtue of its non-subscription, so that men of all shades of opinion can enter its portals. Moreover, there is this to remember, that by insisting mainly on our Unitarianism, we put ourselves in intimate association with such religions as Mohammedanism and Judaism, with which we have scarcely anything in

common, except a special view about the numerical character of the Godhead; and we cut ourselves off from all other existing Christian Churches, wth whom we have most things in common, except that they say "Three in one," and we say "One," and either may be right, or both may be wrong. Whatever we ourselves may mean by Unitarianism—and I doubt not that many use the word as expressive of the broadest religious principles—the general public is convinced that it means that we deny Christ, and are anti-Christian. I come up against this feeling repeatedly. And I also come up against the feeling of those very men we desire to get into our Church, the intelligent and public spirited men, that they are looking for a Christian Church, not a sectarian church, no matter how broad its doctrines.

We may shuffle and say that, after all, our churches are called Non-Subscribing, and that the general public is to blame for calling them Unitarian. I grant that there are notice-boards which profess our non-subscription, but when our members themselves speak of their churches as Unitarian, the general public can only draw one conclusion. Some of our churches, however, flagrantly flaunt the title Unitarian, and these churches, I submit, are traitors to the cause of the free, unsectarian Christianity for which our ancestors suffered.

In any case, we cannot get away from the fact that our churches are not a success; that we were few to begin with, and after two hundred years or so, are fewer still. I humbly submit that the reason is, that we have put ourselves in the same position as the orthodox churches, and to all intents and purposes have made ourselves a dogmatic Church, and that along with the dogmatic Churches we are being passed by in the onward movement of human thought and spiritual enterprise. We shall never make a difference in the world, unless we stress both in theory and practice the necessity of Christian behaviour over any particular Christian belief. I am not one of those who have so little faith in God's power and man's capacity as to imagine that, unless we have our beliefs carefully labelled and dogmatically expressed, we shall become what some have called "Nothingarian." We cannot be Nothingarian any more than our Lord, St. Paul, and the early Christians were Nothingarian, so long as the spirit of Christ is the inspiration of our activities, and leads us to noble and beneficial moral enterprise. While it is our duty to hold our own individual theological opinions, it is even more our duty to have a common desire to spread the Christ spirit throughout the world. I myself, I suppose, would be called an Unitarian Christian, although I have as much objection to calling myself an Unitarian Christian as many an orthodox believer would have to calling himself a Trinitarian Christian. But, in any case, I put my Christianity before my Unitarianism. With all my faults and failings of temper and purpose, I love to think of myself as a Christian, called on to follow, even though it be far off, the Christ, in the spirit of freedom and high moral endeavour. Therefore I stretch out the right hand of fellowship, in common work and common worship, to all those who try to be Christians, no matter how they may seem to mar the fair perfection of Christianity with their opinions and beliefs. However they may regard me, never will I, with God's help, give them any right to say that I refused or made difficult communion with them.

Time forbids my making practical suggestions whereby we might put ourselves on the high road to success as the Church of the Future. I have every confidence, however, that the speakers who follow me will be able to do something in that matter. But this I will say, we need so great a change of heart as to begin to think more of being Christians than of professing ourselves Unitarians. That change of heart, I am convinced, would make so great a difference in the world that we should be welcomed as the Church for all men and women who desire to work for God in the free spirit of Christ. But are we capable of that change of heart?

Killed in Action.

CAPTAIN W. H. SMYTH.

BANBRIDGE.

In the First Presbyterian Church, Downshire Road, Banbridge, on Sunday, 9th July, a memorial service was held to Captain W. Haughton Smyth, 13th Royal Irish Rifles, who fell in action on the 1st July. The Rev. J. Glynne Davies, who occupied the pulpit, paid a touching tribute to the memory of the deceased. The congregation was deeply moved, and there was a general manifestation of grief at the loss of such a gallant gentleman. Addressing the congregation, the Rev. Mr. Davies said :—

It is with a heavy heart that I stand before you here to-day to say a few words respecting the sad yet glorious death of our friend, Captain W. Haughton Smyth. Captain Smyth was killed in action on Saturday, July 1st whilst leading his men in the great British offensive in Flanders. I am not going to preach a sermon—a sermon would be too formal, and I cannot find it in my heart to do it. I had so fervently hoped that when the tumult of this tragic war had ceased we would have had the joy of seeing him back with us again to take his place in our church life as in former days. Yes, in this church, which his ancestors who crossed the border-land before him had served so faithfully and devotedly. Our hopes have been shattered ; he has gone into the nearer presence of the Great Father, and we are left to mourn

CAPTAIN W. H. SMYTH.

his loss, with the sad truth haunting our eyes and hearts to-day, that his place among us here shall see him no more. We gratefully remember that since he left to take his place among the soldiers of the King, whenever he came home on leave, he never failed to COME TO THE CHURCH OF HIS CHILDHOOD, and join us in our worship.

"Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it," says the Master. Haughton Smyth has lost his life in a sacred cause, but he has lost it only to find it made nobler and brighter than ever before. His body lies in the cold earth, but that which is greater than all matter, that which cannot be crushed or shattered by German explosive shell or pierced by German steel remains—the soul has gone to its God who gave it. That indestructible self against which all brute substances and forces beat in vain, that can never die. A glorious and pious memory cannot fade or be forgotten, but they outshine the stars themselves. Probe life into its very depths—read history as widely as you will, and you will find that the things that remain—the names that are still fresh and young in the hearts and minds of the generations of men are the names of those who have practised the philosophy of the Master, who have in self-forgetfulness given themselves freely in a sacred cause. "Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." "Greater love hath no man than this—that a man lay down his life for his friends." We mourn the loss of such a faithful pillar of our Church, yet we rejoice

THAT HE DIED SO GLORIOUSLY.

"It is sweet," says the ancient poet, "to die in arms for one's native land." The death of such a faithful friend of our Church has for us a trumpet call to service—a renewed and a larger service—a re-consecrating of our whole energies. Captain Smyth laid down his life for his country, its honour, its liberties—he died then for you and me. A greater responsibility rests upon us. We are left to bear forward the inheritance that those who have gone before have handed to us. We must strive to fill the gap which his early departure has made in our ranks. Let us not forget that every new grave that receives our faithful ones brings added responsibilities to those who are left behind. What can we do to prove that no sacrifice is ever made in vain? How can we create a living memorial befitting such a noble deed? Are we going to remain indifferent to the call, and shall his example be lost on us? Nay, let us come closer together, make firmer the bonds of fellowship among us, and resolve that no good cause or good work shall suffer, no effort be spared to make our Church life worthy of the noblest sacrifices of its best adherents. We believe in the religion of character—of upright conduct and noble sacrifice—let us prove it in our social and church life.

THE VOICES OF THE SACRED PAST

are in our ears—the needs of the future are calling us forward—may the former inspire the best in us that we might be equal to the requirements of the latter. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to his relatives in their sad bereavement, especially to his aunt, Miss Smyth. Many a burden of sorrow she has had to bear during the past few years, but none so heavy as this. She had mothered him since his babyhood; she had been his guardian-angel throughout his life. May the Great Father, who knoweth the most secret longings of our hearts, make light her burden, and may the Gospel of the Christ, its hopes of immortality and re-union in the heavenly mansions, pierce the dark cloud of her grief, and bring peace and comfort to her troubled soul. To-day the cry rushes to her lips:

"Oh! for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still."

In her loneliness and her sorrow may the pure, loving memory of her departed dear one dwell in her heart and be with her always. And to him, who has fought the good fight, and whose sun has set on earth for ever, we would say:

"Good-night! God giveth His beloved sleep;
Free from all fears thy Father will thee keep;
And peace eternal give, serene and deep.
Good-night!
Good-night! but not forever brother dear;
Swiftly shall pass our night of parting here,
And we shall pass in God's own sunlight clear.
Good-night!"

At the close of the service the "Dead March in Saul" was played, the congregation standing to show their respect to the memory of the deceased.

CAPTAIN J. S. DAVIDSON.

The intimation that the above had lost his life in the great offensive at the beginning of last month caused widespread sorrow. He enjoyed a personal popularity which it is given few men to possess. At the Sirocco Works, where, prior to the war he was a director, he had earned for himself an unique position. The men had a high regard for him, and when "Mr. Jim" was referred to, one felt the affectionate significance of the form of address. This attachment, the growth of years, seemed to be accentuated when, with the outbreak of war he felt that his country had need of him, and gave up peaceful pursuits for military practice. As in business, so likewise in his military duties, he gave of his best. Taking nothing for granted, but making himself familiar with every detail of his duty, his work was characterised by extreme conscientiousness and thoroughness. Promotion to a Captaincy came as a well-deserved recognition of his capabilities, and all who know him felt that in no other case would increased responsibilities be more seriously borne and more efficiently undertaken. When the Ulster soldiers made their great advance, Captain Davidson was attached to the machine gun corps—an important and perilous post. How nobly he acquitted himself therein, letters received since his death abundantly show. Although severely wounded, his leg being shot away, he continued to work his gun until a further and fatal wound was received. His end was in complete accord with his life. He who was responsible for so many kindly acts to others during his

CAPTAIN J. S. DAVIDSON.

lifetime, appropriately and nobly died in the endeavour to protect his men. Of him we may say truly: "He saved others, himself he could not save." Our personal regret for the loss of a good and gallant officer must, however, yield place to the thought of a more poignant sorrow—that of his parents, relatives and intimate friends. For them we feel, and would here express, the most heartfelt sympathy. May they find comfort and consolation in the thought that in death as in life he cheerfully sacrificed himself for others, and that a character such as his is of permanent worth as well as an imperishable memory.

LIEUTENANT J. DERMOT NEILL.

LIEUTENANT J. DERMOT NEILL

It is with sincere regret that we have to record the death of Lieut. J. Dermot Neill, elder son of Mr. Sharman D. Neill, of Ardmoyle, Cultra, who was killed in action on the 1st of July.

Lieut. Neill, who was only 29 years of age, was educated partly at the Royal Academical Institution, Belfast, and partly at Aldenham College. After leaving school he went to assist his father, and in order to perfect himself in the work, he spent some time in Switzerland studying the practical end of the business. He took an active part in the Ulster Volunteer Force, and on the outbreak of war at once responded to his country's call, obtaining a commission in the 13th Royal Irish Rifles. He was promoted Lieutenant shortly before the Division was moved to France, and was subsequently transferred to the Machine Gun Corps. When the grand advance was made on the 1st of July, he was with his corps—one of the most hazardous positions

in battle—and fell with many another brave companion.

Lieutenant Neill was one of those brave Ulstermen who, not on any rash impulse, but after cool deliberation of all the sacrifices and dangers involved, freely and cheerfully offered his services to his country. He was a keen sports man, and an ardent yachtsman. Those who knew him reckoned it a privilege to count him among their friends.

To his parents and sisters we offer our sincere sympathy in this their second great bereavement through the war.

On Sunday, July 9th, at the morning service in the First Presbyterian Church, Holywood, reference was made to the sad event by Mr. Richardson, who in the course of his sermon said :—

"Lieutenant Neill's response to the call of duty—a call which, from the world's point of view, had little promise to offer— but, on the other hand, much of danger, of privation, of hardship, and to face suffering and death. But he nobly gave his services to his King and country, and for that noble ideal that is sending Britons to war upon war, that in the peace which shall follow their glorious self-sacrifice, the nations of the earth, both great and small, may be free to follow the pursuit of industry and peace.

It is difficult for me to attempt to voice the feelings of this congregation to the parents, sisters and friends of the gallant and noble officer ; but I know the high esteem in which he was held by those worshipping here, and the place his family had in their hearts, and who in this hour of deep trouble— an added trouble, making it doubly pathetic and tragic— would stretch out the hand of sympathy, and with the warm feelings of sorrow—a sorrow that is all akin— and say "God bless and comfort you, and keep you unto the day that is coming."

After the benediction the "Dead March in Saul" was played on the organ as a tribute of respect to the dead officer.

PRIVATE JOSEPH HARPER,

TEMPLEPATRICK.

It is with very great sorrow that we have received news of the death—killed in action—of Joseph Harper, Private, 11th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles. Joseph was nineteen years of age, and enlisted into the Army eight months ago. Comrades have written home to say that they saw him fall ; that he fell in a great charge, when the 11th Battalion earned for itself undying fame, and when many another brave boy gave all that he had to give for his King and Country He fell as a brave boy would fall, with his face to the foe. An uneventful life had been his. He came out of a small cottage on the roadside in our parish, and had been mainly concerned with the duties that belong to the work on a farm. But he had a great heart in him, and when he left his home to go to France, he left with a happy smile on his face, and with a spirit of hope and cheer and fearlessness in his heart. He has answered the roll-call in a better world than this. He was a member of our church, and occupied his place on our Roll of Honour. We express our deep sympathy with his widowed mother, his brothers (one of whom is fighting not far from where Joseph fell), and his sisters in their great loss

REPORT.

Killinchy.— The Sunday School Anniversary Services were held on Sunday, June 18th. Special services were held at 12 noon and 6-30 p.m. Collections in aid of the school funds were taken at both services. The choir sang special hymns and anthems on the occasion, and the preacher was the Rev. D. J. Williams. The funds of the Sunday School benefitted to the extent of £4 11s. 9d.

On the following Saturday, June 24th, the Annual Sunday School Fete was held. The children were entertained in the Lecture Hall to cake and lemonade, to which they did ample justice. The Killinchy Band was in attendance as in other years, and headed the procession to the Misses Watson's lawn, where games of all sorts were indulged in.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING BELIEF AND CONDUCT.

III. DUTY AND WORSHIP.

Q. 25.—What is right conduct?

A. 25.—Right conduct is that which our religion tells us is proper for us to perform as subjects of the Sovereign Spirit, or as children of God. It is our duty towards God. The duty of one person may not be exactly the same as the duty of another, because the religion of the two may differ; that is, they may have different feelings of the relationship with God, or their religious feeling may suggest different lines of conduct.

Q. 26.—Are there any main principles or rules for conduct?

A. 26.—There are two main principles for conduct. First, it has been revealed that it is God's plan and will concerning us that we should value life, in as much as every living thing at the beginning of its existence has a natural desire to escape all danger to life, and at the same time has power to help itself to food. Secondly, if it has been revealed that God is God of all peoples, and of every separate human being, it follows that we are to value the lives of others. The fact that we owe our very religion, such as it is, to the revelation, such as it was, received by those who were in the world before us, and likewise the foundations of all our knowledge of all material and of its utility as a means of continuance and increase of our life, to the experience of those predecessors, another part of the divine plan is revealed, according to which mankind are closely bound or related together. Thus we have two duties:—

I. To do whatever makes for the safety, or length, or increase of our own life.

II. To do whatever makes for the safety, or length, or increase of others' lives.

Obviously it is our duty to abstain from any deed that might damage our own life or the lives of our neighbours.

Q. 27.—Have we the same duty towards all men alike?

A. 27.—We owe the same kind of duty to all men alike since all alike are children of God. But there is a difference of degree. Our indebtedness to some persons is greater than our indebtedness to others. For instance, we owe more to parents and generally, at all events during a part of our existence, more to brothers and sisters, than to strangers. Similarly we owe more in some respects to our neighbours than to persons afar off, and much more to our own countrymen collectively than to the people of foreign lands. To acknowledge that our debt is greater in one case than in another is only another way of confessing that in the former case we have the greater duty.

Q. 28.—Which is the greater duty, that which we owe to ourselves or that which we owe to others?

A. 28.—Jesus said:—

> "Whosoever shall seek to gain his life shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it."—*Lk.* 17-33.

We should associate that dictum with his own example. He might have saved his life, but instead, lost it for the sake of his fellow men. Rather than escape the enmity of the Jews by going away from them or by ceasing to teach, he preferred to do the will of him that sent him even when he foresaw the extent of the persecution he must suffer. It does not become the duty of all in like manner to die for others; but that dictum of Jesus and his own example illustrate the principle upon which it behoves us all as children of that paternal Spirit whom we recognise as such in the testimony of spiritual witnesses that he makes for the welfare of his human family, to acknowledge as our chief duty to make for righteousness likewise, and to be willing to suffer and even, if need be, to die for righteousness sake.

Q. 29.—But was the saying of Jesus true as applied to himself, in so much that had he sought to gain his life he would have lost it, but in losing it he actually preserved it?

A. 29.—In its deeper significance the saying was true in his case. But that needs explanation. We have taken

it to be the first duty of a man to preserve his own life. Now the end of preserving his life may be said to be to lengthen or increase it. But there is a sense in which one's life may be broadened instead of lengthened; and if it be broadened as much as it might have been lengthened, it will be equally increased. The sense in which our life may be capable of being broadened has reference to the spiritual life which may be greatly intensified within a given time, whereas the animal life which may be considerably lengthened according to the care that is taken of it, can be but slightly intensified within a given time. Viewing the spirit as of more importance than the body, and therefore spiritual life of greater importance than the animal, we can understand that in seeking to gain the greatest length of animal life, we may lose the intensity and total abundance of the spiritual life which might have been ours.

Q. 30.—Is there any duty which we owe to God besides that which we owe to fellow men?

A. 30.—There is a duty which is commonly called our religious duty. But just as our duty towards our fellow men is really a duty towards God, because we owe it to them as to children of God; so our duty towards God is really a duty towards men, since we owe it to God as to the Father of mankind.

Q. 31.—What is our religious duty, or the duty which we owe to God?

A. 31.—It is our duty to worship God, which means to pay him reverence for his high worth as the "Power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness."

Q. 32.—Is the worship of God an important duty?

A. 32.—The worship of God is a most important duty, because it is by that means that we keep vividly before our minds the fact of our relationship to him and our consequent obligation as his children to help to accomplish his work by making for righteousness in the world. It is obviously a duty which should be performed publicly as well as privately; for by public worship we remind one another, and remind some who might be otherwise altogether forgetful, of the revelation of God which we have received by inheritance from the past and by communion with God himself in the present.

Q. 33.—In what manner are we to worship God?

A. 33.—We are to worship God in such wise and by all such means as we may learn by experience to be most suitable and worthy to achieve the end in view. In particular, in as much as language is the chief medium of spiritual communion, we are to engage in prayer.

Q. 34.—What is prayer?

A. 34.—Prayer is an address to the Deity. It consists in the ascription of praise for the majesty and excellence of his works, in the rendering of thanks for their beneficence, and in making of supplications for ourselves and for all men for spiritual aids. It is true that God knows what things we have need of before we ask him, but by such supplications we place ourselves in the fittest attitude to receive the richest measure of his gifts and to turn them to the best account for the divine glory and for human wellbeing.

Q. 35.—By what other means may we be helped to worship God?

A. 35.—Our worship may be helped by meditation, and by preaching; meditation being an aid to prayer, and preaching an aid to meditation. The use of music and visible symbolism or of solemn ceremonial acts may be further helpful, but the danger of the delight in these latter things for their own sake distracting instead of assisting our proper thoughts must be carefully avoided.

Q. 36.—What did Jesus say about worship?

A. 36.—We read that, referring to the Hebrew Scriptures, he said:—

"It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."—*Matt. 4-10* and *Lk. 4-8.*

We also read that he said:—

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers."—*Jn. 4-23.*

Reports.

Unity Guild.—On Saturday, July 8th, an excursion in connection with the Unity Guild took place to Ballycarry. From the station we had a slow and pleasant walk up the hill to the village, where we received a cordial welcome from the Rev. Mr. Marsden, who accompanied us to the old churchyard, and pointed out to us the monument to the memory of the "Ballycarry patriot and poet," and other "stones" of special interest to members of our church. Returning to the school-house we found some members of the congregation eager to give us not only a hearty welcome, but also a sumptuous tea, to which we did full justice. After the wants of all had been satisfied, Mr. Hugh Erskine, our President, expressed the sincere thanks of the members of the Guild to the Ballycarry friends for their kind welcome and overflowing hospitality. Mr. Marsden, in reply, said it was a pleasure to see us, and hoped we would soon come back again—a remark which we shall remember. After inspecting the church, and admiring the fine plants there, we strolled up the fields to the Manse. Some continued their walk down to the "bogs," to delight in the beauty of hill and vale, and returned laden with bunches of lovely wild irises; others, the more energetic of the party, engaged in "struggles," a form of wrestling, which afforded amusement for the onlookers and exercise for the players. Reluctantly the last of us said good-bye to our guide, who had charmed us with his store of local information and anecdote. In detachments, and by different routes, we reached Whitehead in good time for our train, and, judging by remarks overheard on the homeward journey, the members were quite convinced that this was one of the most enjoyable excursions we had ever had.

* *

Clough, Co. Down.—In our "Chaste Ionic Temple" here a very pretty wedding took place on 21st June, when the Rev. J. Dare Davies, pastor loci, and Miss Lil M'Cammon, only daughter of the late Alex. M'Cammon, and grand-daughter of the late Andrew M'Cammon, of Nutgrove, were married. The Rev. James Kennedy, of Larne, an old friend of the M'Cammon and Hutton families, to which latter the bride, by her deceased mother, belongs, both families staunch upholders of our Non-Subscribing Church, officiated. The Rev. Mathew Watkins, an old friend and fellow-student of the bridegroom, acted as "best man."

The church was beautifully decorated for the occasion, and was filled by a congregation of well-wishers. Many were the encomiums passed on the young bride, and many the expressions of goodwill, uttered by rich and poor, in that large assembly for the future happiness and welfare of the young couple uniting that day their fates and fortune. The organist and choir were in attendance, and their presence brightened the usual calm and solemnity of the Presbyterian marriage service, by singing, with both sweetness and power, hymns suitable to the occasion. We tender to the happy and popular young couple our hearty good wishes.

* *

Mountpottinger.—The Annual Floral Services were held on Sunday, the 25th June, when the preacher was Rev. Percival Godding, of Ballyclare. The church was prettily decorated by a small band of willing helpers, under the direction of Miss M. Davidson. Fortunately the day was fine, and good congregations were present, with consequent benefit to the Sunday School treasurer.

On the following Saturday, July the 1st, the scholars held their Annual Excursion, the selected place being again Donaghadee, but to the great regret of all concerned, the day turned out most unsatisfactory. Having rained practically all day it was after five o'clock before a move could be made from the Railway Company's pavilion where accommodation had fortunately been secured. In consequence there was no inclination on the part of any one present but to return home at the appointed time; as a matter of fact, some of the elder members left by an early train.

Newry.—The Children's Anniversary and Flower Services were held on Sunday, July 2nd, when the Rev. G. J. Slipper preached both morning and evening. At morning service his discourse was especially addressed to the young people of the congregation, the subject chosen being "The goodly heritage of youth—its opportunities and its claims." The evening service was essentially a children's service, with special hymns. The choir, augmented by the kind services of friends, rendered two anthems—"Solemn and beautiful come the night" and "Pansies, lilies and roses," Mrs. Slipper presiding at the organ. The hymns were heartily sung by the large congregation present and the whole service was bright and inspiring. An appropriate address to the children was given by the minister, who based his remarks upon Ecclesiastes iii., part 11th verse, "He hath made everything beautiful in his time." The collections, on behalf of the Sunday School Fund, were taken up by four of the younger scholars and liberally responded to.

(*A number of Reports unavoidably held over.*)

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